

## CHAP. II.

1567 - 1569.

From Mary's Marriage with Bothwell, to the Election of the Regent Murray.

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 CONTEMPORARY PRINCES.

<i>England.</i>	<i>France.</i>	<i>Germany.</i>	<i>Spain.</i>	<i>Portugal.</i>	<i>Pope.</i>
Elizabeth.	Charles IX.	Maximilian II.	Philip II.	Sebastian.	Pius V.

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It was not to be expected that the late appalling events would be regarded with indifference by the people, the reformed clergy, or the more honest part of the nobility. Bothwell was universally reputed the principal murderer of the king; he was now the husband of their sovereign, and it was commonly reported that he had already laid his schemes to get possession of the young prince, who was kept at Stirling Castle, under the governance of the Earl of Mar. Nor are we to wonder if men even looked with suspicion to the future conduct of the queen herself. She had apparently surrendered her mind to the dominion of a passion which rendered her deaf to every suggestion of delicacy and prudence, almost of virtue. She had refused to listen to the entreaties and arguments of her

best friends, to Lord Herries, who, on his knees implored her not to marry the duke; to de Croc, the French ambassador, who urged the same request; to Beaton, her own ambassador; to Sir James Melvil, whose remonstrances against Bothwell nearly cost him his life.<sup>1</sup> In the face of all this she had precipitated her marriage with this daring and wicked man; and public rumour still accused her of being a party to the murder. Of this last atrocious imputation, indeed, no direct proof was yet brought or offered; but even if we dismiss it as absolutely false, was any mother who acted such a part worthy to be entrusted with the keeping and education of the heir to the throne?

So deeply felt were these considerations, that, as we have seen, a coalition for the destruction of Bothwell, and the preservation of the prince, was now widely organised in Scotland. Of this confederacy Lethington was secretly a member, although he still remained at Dunbar with the queen. Becoming suspected by Bothwell, however, this baron and his associate Huntly had resolved on his death, when Mary threw herself between them, and declared that if a hair of his head perished, it should be at the peril of their life and lands. Thus preserved, he continued his intrigues, and only waited a favourable opportunity to make his escape and join his friends.<sup>2</sup> The plans

<sup>1</sup> Melvil's Memoirs, pp. 176, 177.

<sup>2</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Drury to Cecil, 6 May, 1567. Melvil's Memoirs, p. 178.

of the associated lords had been communicated to Murray, then in France; they were sure to meet with the sanction of the Reformed Church, and the sympathy of the people. France encouraged them; and Robert Melvil and Grange, two leading men in the confederacy, had informed Cecil and Elizabeth of their intentions. Her answer was now anxiously expected.

But this princess, at all times jealous of the royal prerogative, was startled when she understood that the combined lords had not only resolved to prosecute Bothwell for the murder, and to rescue the queen from his thralldom but to crown the prince.<sup>1</sup> In reply to the picture they drew of the violent restraint put upon their sovereign, she informed them, that if Mary's own letters to herself were to be trusted, she was in no thralldom, but had consented to all that had happened; she observed that "to crown her son during his mother's life was a matter for example's sake not to be digested by her or any other monarch;" but she added, that if they would deliver the young prince into her hands to be kept in England, she felt inclined to support them. In the mean time the Earl of Bedford was ordered to hasten northward, that he might have an eye on their<sup>2</sup> movements and afford them some encouragement, whilst Cecil her indefatigable minister had so craftily laid his spies about the court that he received in-

<sup>1</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Drury to Cecil, 6 May, 1567.

<sup>2</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Bedford to Cecil, 11th May, 1567, and Copy, Elizabeth to Bedford, 17 May, 1567.

stant information of the minutest movements of Mary and Bothwell, of the French intrigues carried on by de Croc, and of every step taken by the lords of the secret council. For a brief season after their marriage, the queen and the duke appeared to forget that they had an enemy; and when Mary was informed of the private meetings of her opponents, she treated them with contempt; "Athol," said she, "is but feeble, for Argile, I know well how to stop his mouth; as for Morton, his boots are but new pulled off, (alluding to his recent return from banishment) and still soiled, he shall be sent back to his old quarters."<sup>1</sup>

In the mean time pageants and tourneys were got up to amuse the people; who observed that their queen, casting off her "mourning weed," assumed a gay dress, and frequently rode abroad with the duke, making a show of great contentment. Bothwell too was studious to treat her with respect, refusing to be covered in her presence, which she sometimes playfully resented, snatching his bonnet and putting it on his head;<sup>2</sup> but there were times when his passionate and brutal temper broke through all restraint; and to those old friends who were still at court and saw her in private, it was evident, that though she still seemed to love him, she was a changed and miserable woman. On one occasion, which is recorded by Sir James Melvil and de Croc, who were

<sup>1</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Drury to Cecil, 20 May, 1567.

<sup>2</sup> MS. Letter, St. Paper Off. B. C. Drury to Cecil. Berwick, 25 May, 1567. Id. Ibid, B. C. Drury to Cecil, 20th May, and 27th May, 1567.

present, his language was so bitter and disdainful, that in a paroxysm of despair she called for a knife to stab herself.<sup>1</sup>

About a fortnight after the marriage she dispatched the Bishop of Dunblane to France and Rome; his instructions, which have been preserved, were drawn up with much skill, and contained a laboured but unsatisfactory apology for her late conduct.<sup>2</sup> It was necessary that an envoy should be sent on the same errand to Elizabeth, and here the choice of the queen was unfortunate, for she selected Robert Melvil,<sup>3</sup> the secret but determined enemy of Bothwell, and one of the principal associates in the confederacy against him and herself. It is possible that this gentleman, who bore an honourable character in these times, may have considered, that in accepting this commission he should be able to serve his royal mistress; and whilst he appeared the active agent of her enemies, might secretly check the violence of their designs and labour for her preservation. But whatever may have been his motives, it is certain that he availed himself of the confidence with which he was treated, to reveal her purposes to his confederates, and in the execution of his mission acted for both parties. He received letters from Mary and Bothwell to Elizabeth and Cecil; he was instructed, as he has himself

<sup>1</sup> Melvil's Memoirs, Bann. Edition, p. 180.

<sup>2</sup> Keith, p. 388. Also MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. 27 May, 1567, Drury to Cecil. Also Same to same, 20 May, 1567.

<sup>3</sup> Declaration of Robert Melvil. Hopetoun, MSS.

informed us, to excuse his mistress's recent marriage, and to persuade Elizabeth not to expose her to shame or declare herself an enemy;<sup>1</sup> and at the same moment he carried letters to the English queen, from the lords of the coalition, who accused her of the murder of her husband, and now meditated her dethronement. So completely was he judged to be in their interest, that Morton, the leader of the enterprise, described him to Elizabeth as their trusty friend, whom they had commissioned to declare their latent enterprise to her majesty.<sup>2</sup>

Bothwell's letter, which he sent by this envoy to Elizabeth is worthy of notice. It is expressed in a bold, almost a kingly tone; he was aware, he said, of the queen's ill opinion of him, but he protested that it was undeserved, declared his resolution to preserve the amity between the two kingdoms, and professed his readiness to do her majesty all honour and service. Men of greater birth, so he concluded, might have been preferred to the high station he now occupied; none, he boldly affirmed, could have been chosen more zealous for the preservation of her majesty's friendship, of which she should have experience at any time it might be her pleasure to employ him. The style was different from the servility which so commonly ran through the addresses to this haughty queen,

<sup>1</sup> MS. Declaration of Robert Melvil. Hopetoun, MSS.

<sup>2</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Maitland to Cecil, 21st and 28th June, 1567. MS. Letter St. P. Off. B.C. Morton and the lords to Elizabeth, Edinburgh, 26 June, 1567.

and marked the proud character of mind which, as much as his crimes, distinguished this daring man.<sup>1</sup>

Melvil now left Scotland (June 5) on his mission to the English court; and during his absence, the combined lords rapidly arranged their mode of attack and concentrated their forces. It was judged time to declare themselves, and the contrast between their former and their present conduct was abundantly striking. They who had combined with Bothwell in the conspiracy for the king's murder, and had signed the bond recommending him as a suitable husband for their queen, were now the loudest in their execration of the deed, and their denunciations of the marriage. It was necessary for them, however, from this very circumstance, to act with that caution which accomplices in guilt must adopt when they attempt to expose and punish a companion. If Morton, Argyle, Huntly, Lethington and Balfour, possessed evidence to convict Bothwell and his servants of the murder of the king, it was not to be forgotten that Bothwell could recriminate, and prove, by the production of the bond, that they had consented to the same crime. We know, too, that he had shown this bond to some of the actual murderers, and unless they were slain in hot blood, or made away with before

<sup>1</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Bothwell to Elizabeth, 5 June, 1567. Bothwell at the same time wrote to Cecil and Sir N. Throkmorton, by Robert Melvil. His letter to Cecil is in the St. P. Off. dated June 5, that to Throkmorton in the possession of Mr. Rodd, bookseller, Great Newport Street.

they had an opportunity of speaking out, the whole dark story might be revealed. These apprehensions which seem to me not to have been sufficiently kept in mind, account for the extraordinary circumstances which soon after occurred.

Mary had summoned her nobles to attend her with their feudal forces on an expedition to Liddesdale, but most of them had already left court, and neglected the order. Huntly, who had been much in her confidence, corresponded with her enemies.<sup>1</sup> Lethington, the secretary, whom we have seen carried prisoner to Dunbar, pretended still to be devoted to her service, but betrayed all her purposes to the confederate lords, and at length finding a good opportunity, suddenly left the court. Murray it was said, had come to England, and taken a decided part against her, and Hume, one of the most warlike and powerful border lords, was active in his opposition.<sup>2</sup> No army therefore could be assembled; so detested indeed was Bothwell, that even the soldiers whom he had in pay, incurred his suspicion, and it was reported he only trusted one company, commanded by Captain Cullen, a man suspected to be deeply implicated in the king's murder.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Drury to Cecil. B.C. 20th May. 1567.

<sup>2</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. 7 June, 1567. B.C. Drury to Cecil. Also MS. Letter, St. P. Off. 17th May, 1567. B.C. Drury to Cecil. Also MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Drury to Cecil. B.C. 25 May. 1567.

<sup>3</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Drury to Cecil. B.C. 31st May, 1567, with an undated Letter, probably an enclosure.



Under these circumstances of discouragement, the queen and the duke had retired to Borthwick Castle, a seat of the laird of Crookston's, about ten miles from Edinburgh, when the confederates, led by Hume and the other border chiefs, made a rapid night march, and suddenly surrounded the place. They were nearly a thousand strong, and along with him were Morton, Mar, Lindsay, Grange, and their followers, who deemed themselves sure of their prize, but Bothwell escaped through a postern in the back wall, to Haddington; Here he remained a day in concealment, and then reached Dunbar, where he was next day joined by the queen, who fled in man's apparel, booted and spurred from Borthwick, and thus eluded notice.<sup>1</sup> Disappointed in their first attempt, the confederates marched to the capital, which they reached at four in the morning, broke open the gates, took possession of the city, and published a proclamation, declaring that they had risen in arms to revenge the death of the king, and the forcible abduction of their sovereign.<sup>2</sup> Here they were soon after joined by the Earl of Athol and the noted Lethington, a man who had belonged to all parties,

<sup>1</sup> Sloane MSS. Ayscough, 3199. Brit. Museum. Copy. John Beaton to his Brother. 11th to 17th June. Printed by Laing, vol. ii. p. 106. MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Drury to Cecil, Berwick, 12 June, 1567.

<sup>2</sup> Anderson, vol. i. p. 131. MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. 12 June, 1567. B. C. Drury to Cecil. B. C. MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Same to same. B. C. 14 June, 1567.

and had deserted all, yet whose vigour of mind, and great capacity for state affairs made him still welcome, wherever he turned himself. High wages were now offered to any volunteers who would come forward, and to give greater publicity to the cause for which they fought, a banner was displayed, on which was painted the body of the murdered king, lying under a tree as he had been first found, with the young prince, kneeling beside it and underneath the motto "*Judge and avenge my cause, Oh Lord.*" The sight of this, and the tenor of their proclamation, produced a strong effect, and the confederates had the satisfaction to find, not only that the common people and the magistrates warmly espoused their cause, but that Sir James Balfour, who enjoyed the highest confidence with Bothwell, and commanded the castle, was ready to join them. This infamous man had, as we have seen, been deeply implicated in the murder, and was reported to have some secret papers regarding it in his keeping. His anticipated defection, therefore, gave new spirit to the party.<sup>1</sup>

Whilst such was the state of things in the city, Mary and Bothwell had assembled their followers at Dunbar, and such was the effect of the royal name, that many of the border barons and gentry deserted Hume, and joined the queen's camp. Along with them came the lords Seaton, Yester,

<sup>1</sup> Beaton to his Brother; from Sloane MSS. 3199. Laing. Append. vol. ii. p. 106. Also MS. Letter, S. P. Off. Scrope to Cecil. B.C. Carlisle, June 16th, 1567.

and Borthwick, so that within a short time her force amounted to about 2,000 men. With these Mary and the duke instantly marched against the enemy, leaving Dunbar on the 14th June, and advancing that night to Seaton. Next morning she caused a proclamation to be read to the army, in which her opponents were arraigned as traitors, who for their private ends had determined to overturn the government. They pretended, she said, to prosecute the duke her husband, for the king's murder, after he had been already fully acquitted of the crime; they declared their resolution to rescue herself from captivity, but she was no captive as they who had themselves recommended her marriage with the duke well knew; they had taken arms as they affirmed to defend the prince her son—but he was in their own hands, and how then could they think him in danger? in short all was a mere cover for their treason, and this she trusted soon to prove by the aid of her faithful subjects on the persons of these unnatural rebels.<sup>1</sup> Her next step was to entrench herself on Carberry-hill, within the old works which had been thrown up by the English army previous to the battle of Pinky.

Mary here awaited her opponents, who shewed no less alacrity to engage, marching from Edinburgh on the morning of Sunday, the 15th, and taking the route to Musselburgh, which soon

<sup>1</sup> Spottiswood, p. 206. Beaton to his Brother. Laing. vol. ii. p. 106, 110. MS. Letter, St. P. Off, Drury to Cecil. B. C. 14th, June, 1567.

brought them in sight of their adversaries. Monsieur de Croc, the French ambassador, was then with the queen. He had disapproved of her marriage, and we have seen that he had even encouraged the confederates with a view of having the prince sent to France,<sup>1</sup> but he now made an attempt at mediation, and carried a message to Morton and Glencairn, assuring them of their sovereign's disposition to pardon the past, on condition that they returned to their duty. "We have not come here," said Glencairn, when he heard this proposal, "to solicit pardon for ourselves, but rather to give it to those who have offended." "We are in arms," added Morton, "not against our queen, but the duke of Orkney, the murderer of her husband. Let him be delivered up, or let her majesty remove him from her company, and we shall yield her obedience."<sup>2</sup>

It was evident from this reply that there was little hope of peace, and the confederate lords were the more determined, as an indisposition to fight was beginning to be apparent in the royal troops, some men at that moment stealing over to the enemy. Observing this, Bothwell, who was never deficient in personal courage, rode forward, and by a herald,

<sup>1</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Drury to Cecil. B. C. 9 June, 1567. Also Same to same. MS. Letter, St. P. Off. 31st May, 1567. Also 15 June, 1567. Bedford to Leicester. MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C.

<sup>2</sup> Keith, p. 401. MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Scrope to Cecil. Carlisle, 17 June, 1567. B. C. Also MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Drury to Cecil, Berwick, 18th and 19th June 1567.

sent his defiance to any one that dared arraign him of the king's murder. His gage was accepted by James Murray of Tullibardin, the same baron who had, it was said, affixed the challenge to the Tolbooth gate, but Bothwell refused to enter the lists with one who was not his peer, and singled out Morton, who readily answered, that he would fight him instantly on foot and with two-handed swords. Upon this, Lord Lindsay, of the Byres, interfered. The combat, he contended, belonged of right to him, as the relative of the murdered king, and he implored the associate lords by the services he had done, and still hoped to do, that they would grant him the courtesy to meet the duke in this quarrel. It was deemed proper to humour Lindsay, and Morton presented him with his own sword, a weapon well known and highly valued, as having been once wielded by his renowned ancestor, Archibald Bell the Cat. Lindsay then proceeded to arm himself, and kneeling down before the ranks, audibly implored God to strengthen his arm to punish the guilty, and protect the innocent. Bothwell too seemed eager to fight, but at this critical juncture, Mary interfered, and resolutely forbad the encounter.<sup>1</sup>

By this time it was evident that desertion was spreading rapidly in her army, nor had her remonstrances the least effect: she implored them to ad-

<sup>1</sup> Copy of the time. St. P. Off. — to Cecil, June 16th, 1567. Also MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Drury to Cecil, June 19th, 1567, with enclosure. Calderwood MS. Hist. Ayscough, 4735, p. 668. Also Spottiswood, p. 207.

vance, assured them of victory, taunted them with cowardice, but all to so little purpose, that when Grange at the head of his troops, began to wheel round the hill so as to turn their flank, the panic became general, and the queen and Bothwell were left with only sixty gentlemen, and the band of hackbutters.<sup>1</sup> It was his design to throw himself between Dunbar and this little force, thus cutting off Bothwell's escape, but Mary perceived it, and sent the laird of Ormiston to demand a parley. This was immediately granted, and when Grange rode forward, he assured his sovereign of their readiness to obey her, if that man who now stood beside her, and was guilty of the king's murder, were dismissed. To this she replied, that if the lords promised to return to their allegiance, she would leave the duke and put herself in their hands. He carried this message to his brethren, and came back with a solemn assurance that on such conditions they were ready to receive and obey her as their sovereign. Hearing this, the queen, ever too credulous and apt to act on the impulse of the moment, held a moment's conversation aside with Bothwell. What passed can only be conjectured; he appeared to waver, and remonstrate, but when she gave him her hand, he took farewell, turned his horse's head and rode off the field, none of the confederates offering the least impediment.<sup>2</sup> It was the last time they ever met.

<sup>1</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Scrope to Cecil, June 17, 1567.

<sup>2</sup> Raumer quoting de Croc's despatches, p. 100, 101. De Croc says in his letter to Catherine de Medici, "Bothwell became

Mary now waited for some time till he was out of danger, and then coming forward exclaimed, "Laird of Grange, I surrender to you on the conditions you have specified in the name of the lords." That baron then took her hand, which he kissed, and holding her horse's bridle, conducted her down the hill to the confederates. On reaching the lines, she was met by the nobles who received her on their knees. Here madam, said Morton, is the true place where your grace should be, and here we are ready to defend and obey you as loyally as ever nobility of this realm did your progenitors." So fully felt was this sentiment, that when some of the common soldiers began to utter opprobrious language, Grange drew his sword and compelled them into silence.

Such was the extraordinary scene which led to the escape of Bothwell, and it demands a moment's reflection. The confederate nobles had declared that their object in taking arms was, to bring this infamous man to justice, as the murderer of the king, yet at the moment when they had him in their power, he was permitted to escape. Nothing could appear more inconsistent, and yet perhaps looking to the motives which have been already pointed out, it will not be greatly alarmed, and at last asked the queen whether she would keep the promise of fidelity which she had made to him. She answered yes, and gave him her hand upon it. He then mounted his horse, and fled with a few attendants."—All this, however, must, as I have said, be conjecture.—De Croc was not present—after his unsuccessful attempt at mediation, he had retired to Edinburgh. Spottiswood, p. 207.

found unnatural. He, indeed, was the principal murderer, but Morton, Huntly, Lethington, and Argyle, were aware, that if driven to his defence, he could bring them in as accomplices. They allowed him to escape, because he was infinitely more easily dealt with as a fugitive than as a prisoner.

But to return to Mary. Encouraged by the first appearances of courtesy, she declared her wish to communicate with the Hamiltons, who, the night before, had advanced in considerable strength to Linlithgow. This was peremptorily refused, upon which she broke into reproaches, appealed to their promise, and demanded how they dared to treat her as a prisoner? Her questions and her arguments were unheeded, and she now bitterly repented her precipitation. Her spirit, however, instead of being subdued, was rather roused by their baseness. She called for Lindsay, one of the fiercest of the confederate barons, and bad him give her his hand. He obeyed: "By the hand," said she, "which is now in yours, I'll have your head for this."<sup>1</sup> Unfortunate princess! When she spoke thus, little did she know how soon that unrelenting hand, which had been already stained with Riccio's blood, would fall still heavier yet upon herself.

It was now evening, and the queen riding between Morton and Athol, was conducted to the capital,

<sup>1</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Drury to Cecil. B.C. June 18, 1567. Also Copy St. P. Off. June 16, 1567, Anonymous—to Cecil.



where she awoke to all the horrors of her situation.<sup>1</sup> She was a captive in the hands of her worst enemies. The populace, as she rode through the streets, received her with yells and execrations, the women pressing round, accused her in coarse terms as an adulteress stained with her husband's blood; and the soldiers, unrestrained by their officers, kept constantly waving before her eyes the banner on which was painted the murdered king, and the prince crying for vengeance. At first they shut her up in the provost's house, where she was strictly guarded. It was in vain she remonstrated against this breach of faith; in vain she implored them to remember that she was their sovereign: they were deaf to her entreaties, and she was compelled to pass the night, secluded even from her women, in solitude and tears. But the morning only brought new horrors. The first object which met her eyes was the same dreadful banner, which, with a refinement in cruelty, the populace had hung up directly opposite her windows. The sight brought on an agony of despair and delirium, in the midst of which she tore the dress from her person, and, forgetting that she was almost naked, attempted in her phrenzy to address the people.<sup>2</sup> This piteous spectacle could not be seen without producing an impression in her favour,

<sup>1</sup> Letter of John Beaton to his Brother, Sloane MSS. Ayscough, 3199, printed by Laing, vol. ii. p. 106.

<sup>2</sup> John Beaton to his Brother, 17 June, 1567. Laing, vol. ii., App. p. 106.

and the citizens were taking measures for her rescue when she was suddenly removed to Holyrood. Here a hurried consultation was held, and in the evening she was sent a prisoner to Lochleven, a castle situated in the midst of a lake, belonging to Douglas, one of the confederates, and from which escape was deemed impossible. In her journey thither, she was treated with studied indignity, exposed to the gaze of the mob, miserably clad, mounted on a sorry hackney, and placed under the charge of Lindsay and Ruthven, men of savage manners, even in this age, and who were esteemed peculiarly fitted for the task.<sup>1</sup> Against this base conduct, it is said, that Grange loudly remonstrated, and that, to silence his reproaches, the lords produced an intercepted letter, written by the queen from her prison in Edinburgh to Bothwell, in which she assured him that she would never desert him. The story is told by Melvil, but I have found no trace of it, and Grange had already manifested such bitter hostility to his sovereign, that his sincerity may be questioned, especially as he continued to act with his former associates.<sup>2</sup>

Thus far the measures of the confederates were crowned with success. The queen was a prisoner in their hands ; they were possessed of the person of the heir apparent, who had been committed to the governance of Mar, one of their principal leaders ;

<sup>1</sup> Id. Ibid. Also MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Drury to Cecil, B. C. June 18, 1567.

<sup>2</sup> Melvil's Memoirs, Bannat. edition, p. 185.

Bothwell was a fugitive, and they were sustained in every thing they had done by the support of the ministers of the Reformed Church, and by the general voice of the people. For the present, therefore, all was deemed secure, and on considering their future policy, they determined to pause till it was seen with what feelings the late events were regarded by England and France. With this view they lost no time in despatching letters, first to Elizabeth, and after a little interval to the King of France. To the English queen they declared that their only motive in taking up arms had been the punishment of the king's murder; they assured her, that so soon as this was accomplished, their sovereign should be restored to freedom, and as for the coronation of the young prince, that such an idea had never been contemplated. In conclusion, they expressed a hope that she would consider their want of money, and send them the sum of three or four thousand crowns to hire soldiers, in return for which they were ready to refuse the offers of France, and submit to be wholly guided by England.<sup>1</sup>

To France their letters were full of amity, but more general and guarded. De Croc, the ambassador, had at once perceived the advantage of securing the friendship of the successful party.

<sup>1</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Sir John Forster to Cecil, June 20, 1567. The messenger's name was John Rede, with Instructions inclosed. Also St. P. Off. Drury to Cecil, June 20, 1567. Also MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Bedford to Cecil, June 23, 1567.

Although pretending a great zeal for Mary's service, he really favoured the confederates, and had not only proposed that the young prince should be brought up under the care of the king his master, but advised them to keep the queen of Scots securely, now that they had her in their hands.<sup>1</sup> To him the confederates gave fair words, but prudently determined not to commit themselves, till they heard more definitively from England. They at the same time entered into communication with Murray and the Earl of Lennox, whose presence they required in Scotland.<sup>2</sup>

At this crisis (June 20), according to the evidence of Cecil's journal, which has been, on insufficient grounds, I think, suspected of forgery, the lords of the secret council, through the treachery of a servant of Bothwell's, became possessed of a box or casket, which was said to contain some private letters and sonnets addressed by the queen to the duke. This was that celebrated silver casket, which afterwards made so much noise, and in which, as asserted by the enemies of Mary, were found decided proofs of her guilt. The whole details connected with the story are suspicious, nor is it the least suspicious of these circumstances, that in the confidential letters of Drury to Cecil, written at this period from day to day, and embra-

<sup>1</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Drury to Cecil, B. C. June 20, 1567.

<sup>2</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Drury to Cecil, B. C. July 9, 1567.  
Also MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. July 12. Same to same, and July 19, Scrope to Cecil.

eing the most minute information of every thing which passed, there is no allusion to such a seizure. It is, however, to be remembered that Morton, Lethington, and Sir James Balfour, the three great leaders of the confederacy, were themselves deeply implicated in the assassination of Darnley, and that they would be exceedingly likely to suppress such a discovery, till the contents of the casket were rigidly examined. They knew that Bothwell was in possession of the bond for the king's murder, and the casket might contain it, or other papers equally conclusive. It is certain, that on the day of this reported discovery (June 20), Morton and his associates despatched George Douglas, one of the most confidential of their number, on a secret mission to the Earl of Bedford, and it is possible his message may have related to it.<sup>1</sup> In this mysterious state we must leave the matter at present.

On hearing of the late extraordinary events in Scotland, Elizabeth's feelings were of a divided kind. Her ideas of the inviolability of the royal prerogative, were offended by the imprisonment of the queen. However great were Mary's faults, or even her guilt, it did not accord with the high creed of the English princess, that any subjects should dare to expose or punish them, and we have seen, that in a former conversation with Randolph, she alluded to Grange's letters to Bedford, in terms of

<sup>1</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Bedford to Cecil, B. C. June 23, 1567. Also MS. Letter. St. P. Off. Morton and the Lords to Bedford, June 20, 1567.

much bitterness.<sup>1</sup> But notwithstanding this, she was fully alive to the necessity of supporting a Protestant party in Scotland, and she well knew that nothing could so effectually promote her views, as to induce the confederate lords to refuse the offers of France, and deliver to her the young prince to be educated in Protestant principles at the court of England. Nor was she ignorant that the able and crafty men who directed their proceedings, had determined to refuse every petition for the restoration of their sovereign to liberty, an event probably as much deprecated by Elizabeth as by themselves.<sup>2</sup> It was perfectly safe for the English queen therefore, to give fair promises to Mary, and to remonstrate with the confederates upon this subject. Such being her views, she despatched Robert Melvil, who was then in England, with a letter to his mistress, and ordered Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, one of her ablest diplomatists, to hold himself in readiness to proceed on a mission to Scotland.

Meanwhile the lords of the secret council, who had suffered the principal actor in the king's murder to escape, became active in their search for inferior delinquents. Captain Cullen, a daring follower of Bothwell's, had been seized on their first advance to Edinburgh, and soon after two others, Captain Blacater, and Sebastian de Villours, were apprehended. The foreigner was soon discharged, but

<sup>1</sup> Randolph to Leicester, May 10, 1567. See *supra*, p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> Gonzalez Apuntamientos, p. 322. *Memorias de la Real Acad. de la Historia*, vol. vii.

Blacater was tried for the murder, convicted, and executed before an immense concourse of spectators, who eagerly surrounded the scaffold. To their disappointment he died solemnly calling God to witness his innocence, and revealed no particulars.<sup>1</sup> Of Cullen, who, it was reported, on his apprehension, had discovered the whole details of the conspiracy, we hear no more. It is possible, he may have been commanded to say nothing, because he might have told too much.

These efforts of the confederates to bring the guilty to justice, did not satisfy the people; it was suspected that amongst their leaders, were some who dreaded any strict examination, and Morton and Lethington, distrusting the fickle nature of the lower classes, began to dread a re-action in the queen's favour. This was the more alarming, as the rival faction of the Hamiltons had recently mustered in great strength. The head of this party was nominally the Duke of Chastelherault, now in France, but really his brother the Archbishop of St. Andrew's. Failing Mary and her son, the duke was next heir to the throne, and he and his advisers had acuteness enough to penetrate into the views of Morton and his party. They saw clearly that the consequence of the continued captivity of their sovereign, must be the coronation of the young prince, his protection by Elizabeth, and the establishment

<sup>1</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Drury to Cecil, B. C. June 25, Also B. C. June 27, 1567. Same to same. Also *Historie of James the Sext*, p. 15, Bannat. edition.

of a regency under which Lennox, Morton, or Murray, would engross the whole power of the state. Having been generally opposed to Mary and her marriage, her captivity was not in itself a matter which gave them any very deep concern, but in weighing the two evils, its continuance and a regency, or her restoration and a third marriage, they chose what they thought the least, and determined to make an effort for her restoration.

For this purpose, a convention of the lords of their party was held at Dumbarton (June 29), and proclamation made for all good subjects to be ready on nine hours warning to take arms for the delivery of the queen.<sup>1</sup> They were here joined by Argile and Huntly, who had deserted the confederates, by Herries, a baron of great power, and vigour of character, and by Crawford, with the Lords Seaton and Fleming, whilst the Archbishop of St. Andrew's, and the celebrated Lesly, Bishop of Ross, directed their councils.<sup>2</sup> Their deliberations were watched and reported to his court by de Croc, the French ambassador, who found them as

<sup>1</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Drury to Cecil—He states that "the confederates are very anxious for Lennox's return into Scotland, to beard the Hamiltons." June 20, 1567. Also Same to same, June 25, 1567. St. P. Off. B. C. Also Same to same, MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. June 29, and Same to same, July 1, 1567, B. C.

<sup>2</sup> Bond signed by the Convention at Dumbarton, June 29, 1567. St. P. Off. and printed by Keith, p. 436.



was to be anticipated, more inclined to France than England.<sup>1</sup>

It was not to be expected that the lords of the secret council could view such proceedings without anxiety, and they thought it prudent to strengthen themselves by a more intimate union with the party of the Reformed Church. Here, indeed, was their strongest hold; for the reformed clergy were sternly opposed to the queen, they firmly believed that she was participant in the king's murder, and they possessed the highest influence with the people.

On their taking possession of the capital, immediately after their unsuccessful attempt at Borthwick, Glencairn, one of the fiercest zealots of these times, had signalized his hatred of popery by an attack upon the royal chapel at Holyrood, in which he demolished the altar, and destroyed the shrines and images. This attack, although condemned by some of the party, was not unwelcome to the ministers, and on the 25th of June, an assembly of the church was held at Edinburgh. In this meeting of his friends and brethren, John Knox re-appeared. This great leader of the Reformed Church, had fled, as we have seen,<sup>2</sup> from the capital, immediately after the assassination of Riccio, and had deemed it unsafe to return, till the queen was imprisoned in Lochleven. Of his history in this interval, we know little; he probably resided chiefly

<sup>1</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Drury to Cecil, B. C. June 29, 1567.

<sup>2</sup> Supra p. 43.

with his relatives in the neighbourhood of Berwick, and he was in England at the time of the king's murder,<sup>1</sup> but about a month after that event, he again entered into communication with Bedford and Cecil,<sup>2</sup> and now that all fear from the animosity of the queen was at an end, and the chief power in the government once more in the hands of his friends, he again took his part in the discussions which agitated the country.

In his retirement, he appears to have lost nothing of his wonted fire. He was animated by the same stern, uncompromising, and unscrupulous spirit as before, and the crisis appeared to him to be highly favourable for the complete demolition of popery, and the permanent establishment of the Protestant faith. Henceforward we must regard him as the leader of the Reformed Church, and upon certain conditions he declared himself ready to give his cordial assistance to the confederates. He stipulated that they should recognize the parliament held at Edinburgh in 1560, and its acts as laws of the realm. It will be recollected, that this was the famous parliament in which popery had been overthrown, and the reformed religion established, and that notwithstanding all the efforts of Elizabeth and the Protestants, Mary had never given her consent to its decrees. The confederates, who were mostly, if not all, Protestants, of course experienced no such scruples, but em-

<sup>1</sup> Mc Crie's Life of Knox, vol. ii., p. 150.

<sup>2</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Bedford to Cecil, March 11, 1566-7.

braced the proposal at once, and entered into the strictest union with Knox and his party. Nor was this all. They agreed to restore the patrimony of the church which had been seized and devoted to civil uses, to entrust the education of youth in all colleges and public seminaries to the reformed clergy, to put down idolatry (so they denominated the Roman Catholic faith) by force of arms, if necessary, to watch over the education of the prince, committing him to some godly and grave governor, and to punish to the uttermost the murderers of the king.<sup>1</sup> In return for this, Knox adopted the cause of the lords of the Secret Council (such was the title by which the confederacy against Mary and Bothwell was now known), with all the energy belonging to his character. From former experience, none knew better than this extraordinary man the strength of popular opinion when once roused, and few understood better how to rouse it by that style of pulpit eloquence which he had adopted:—earnest, sententious, satirical, colloquial, often coarse, but always to the point, and always successful. There can be little doubt, I think, that the great secondary cause of the establishment of the Reformation in Scotland was the force of popular opinion, roused, directed, and kept in continual play, by the sermons and addresses of the clergy. Such an engine was not permitted in

<sup>1</sup> Knox: Hist. p. 449. Spottiswood, p. 210. MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Drury to Cecil, B. C. Berwick, June 25, 1567. Also MS. Letter, B. C. June 27, 1567. Same to the same.

England by Elizabeth and her ministers: Knox regretted it, and repeatedly requested license to preach at Berwick, but he was invariably refused.

An attempt was made at this time to bring over the Hamiltons and their associates to the confederates,<sup>1</sup> and letters were written in the name of the Church to Argyle, Huntly, Herries, and others requesting their presence at Edinburgh, on the 20th July, to which day they had adjourned their assembly. To enforce this, Knox, with three colleagues, Douglas, Row, and Craig, waited upon them, and urged the necessity of their attendance, that they might labour for the re-establishment of the policy and patrimony of the Church. But the Hamiltons suspected the overtures, and the secret council, who dreaded lest delay should give strength to their enemies, determined to compel the queen to abdicate the government in favour of the prince her son.

The known character of Mary, however, rendered this daring resolution a matter of no easy accomplishment. Her confinement in Lochleven had been accompanied with circumstances of great rigour; she was there placed under the charge of Lindsay and Ruthven, men familiar with blood, and of coarse and fierce manners. The lady of the castle, Margaret Erskine, daughter of Lord Erskine, had been mistress to the queen's father, James V., and was mother to the Earl of Mur-

<sup>1</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Berwick. Drury to Cecil, June 25, 1567.

ray. She had been afterwards married to Sir Robert Douglas; and their son, William Douglas, who was proprietor of the castle, had early joined the confederacy. She herself is said to have been a woman of a proud and imperious spirit, and was accustomed to boast that she was James's lawful wife, and her son Murray, his legitimate issue, who had been supplanted by the queen.<sup>1</sup>

Under such superintendents, Mary could not expect a lenient captivity; but her spirit was unbroken, though Villeroy, a gentleman sent to her by the king of France, was denied all access, and it became impossible for her to receive advices of the proceedings of the Hamiltons, from the strictness with which all communication was cut off.<sup>2</sup> She had sent, as we have seen, Robert Melvil on a mission to the English queen soon after her marriage. During his stay in England those sad calamities had occurred, with which we are acquainted; and now that she was a prisoner, shut out from all friendly intercourse, and fed only with the deferred hopes that sicken the heart, she looked anxiously for his return.

But this servant had, as we have seen, become the envoy of her enemies. During his stay in England, he had acted as the secret agent of the confederate lords, who had imprisoned her; he solicited money to support them in their enterprise; he received orders from them to supply

<sup>1</sup> Keith, p. 403.

<sup>2</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Drury to Cecil. 27 June, 1567.  
Also Id: Same to same, June 20, 1567.

himself out of this sum when it was advanced by Elizabeth; he was cautioned against declaring himself too openly, as something had come to the ears of the French ambassador:<sup>1</sup> he proposed to the English queen the project for Mary's "dimitting the crown" in favour of her son, with which the lords who had imprisoned her, had made him acquainted; and on his arrival in Edinburgh, his first meeting was neither with his own sovereign nor the friends, who had combined for her delivery, but with the lords of the secret council. He assured them of the support of the English queen, in the "honourable enterprise," in which they had engaged; he informed them that Elizabeth had agreed to Mary's resignation of the crown, provided it came of her own consent; and he then, before visiting his mistress in her prison at Lochleven, addressed a letter to Cecil, from which, as it contains his own account of his negotiation, I think it right to give this extract, "It may please your honour," says he, "to be advertised, I came to this town, (Edinburgh,) upon the 29th of June, and have<sup>2</sup> imparted the queen's majesty's good disposition in the assisting and partaking with the lords to prosecute the murderers of the king, and to preserve the prince in the custody of the Earl of Mar.

<sup>1</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Melvil to Cecil, 1st July, 1567; also MS. Letter, Melvil to Cecil, June, 1567; and MS. Letter, in Cipher with the decipher affixed. David Robertson to Melvil, June 26, 1567; also MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Earls of Athol, Morton, and others to Elizabeth, 26 June, 1567.

<sup>2</sup> In Orig. "has."

Whereof the said lords most humbly thank her highness. The whole particularities that I had your honour's advice in, according to the queen your sovereign's meaning, is not at this present resolved on, by reason the most part of noblemen are gone to their houses, to repose them, and their friends, except the Earls of Morton and Athol, with my Lord Hume, my Lord Ledington, Sir James Balfour, captain of the castle, who is daily in council with them, and Mr. James Makgill and the justice clerk. The cause of their going from this town is by some bragging of the Hamiltons, with the Earl of Huntly, minding to convene their forces and make their colour (pretence) for the delivery of the queen ; albeit, it be credibly reported, that they fear the king's murder to be laid to some of their charges ; I mean the Bishop of St. Andrew's ; wherefore it was thought most convenient that the noblemen and gentlemen should in the meantime have their friends in readiness.

“ Before my coming, the lords did write divers instructions unto me, besides a letter written to the Queen's majesty,<sup>1</sup> subscribed by them. The effect whereof was, that as they did understand by me of the good inclination [of] your mistress and council being addicted to help them in their most need, so for their parts their goodwill to do her majesty service, before all other, with time shall be declared. As for their dealing with France, they have used them so discreetly, as neither France

<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth.

may have any just cause to be offended, and the queen your sovereign be well pleased.

“ The lords presently needs but money, for they have already listed divers men of war, and is taking up more. The Hamiltons is judged to be maintained by the queen's' substance, and countenanced by France to have money, seeing France is in doubt to persuade our noblemen. Wherefore, Sir, it is most needful, that with all expedition money may be procured of the queen, your sovereign, and sent thither with Sir Nicholas Fragmarton<sup>2</sup> or by some of the borders, for that necessity that they will be prest to, will be within eight or ten days, which I thought meet to advertise your honour of; and what order shall be taken for my going to the queen is not agreed upon, by reason the most part of lords are not present; and my Lord Ledington being greatly empesched with affairs, might not have leisure to concur at length, but is glad to understand of the care your honour has, that we should do all things by justice and moderation. And that the queen your sovereign may be content with your conference with me, he does well like of your advice in divers heads; always, there is matter enough probable<sup>3</sup> to proceed upon that matter we first agreed upon, and farther is thought expedient.—Ye shall with diligence be advertised; and refers the rest to my Lord of Ledington's letter, who does repose him-

<sup>1</sup> Mary's.

<sup>2</sup> Sir N. Throkmorton.

<sup>3</sup> Probable, here used in the sense of *proveable*.



self upon the care he hopes your honour will continue in for to set forward their honourable enterprise; and the lords for their part will accord with your ambassador to keep the prince: and to her highness desire will put him in the custody of her majesty, if at any time hereafter they shall be minded to suffer him go in any other country. The whole novels<sup>1</sup> here I refer to my Lord of Ledington's letter; and as I learn further your honour shall be advertised. \* \* \* At Edinburgh, the first of July. R. Melvil."<sup>2</sup>

This letter sufficiently explains itself, and proves, that Melvil, although nominally the envoy of Mary, was now acting for the confederates. It unveils also the real intentions of Elizabeth. It shows that her object in dispatching her ambassador, Sir Nicholas Throkmorton, was professedly to procure the queen's liberty; but really to encourage the confederates, to attach them to her service, to obtain possession of the prince if possible, to induce the captive queen to resign the crown, and to hold out to Murray, with whom she, Melvil, and the lords of the secret council were now in treaty, the hope of returning to his country and becoming the chief person in the government.<sup>3</sup> It appears to me also (but this is conjecture), that the mysterious sen-

<sup>1</sup> Novels—news.

<sup>2</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Robert Melvil to Cecil. Edinburgh, 1st July, 1567.

<sup>3</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. R. Melvil to Cecil, 8 July, 1567. Kerny in Fife.

tence<sup>1</sup> in which Melvil informs Cecil that Lethington liked his advice, and that at any rate they had proof enough to proceed on the matter first agreed upon, related to the scheme of compelling their sovereign to agree to their wishes by a threat of bringing her to a public trial for the murder of the king.

On the same day on which this letter was written (July 1st) Melvil repaired to Lochleven, and was admitted to an interview with Mary, in which he delivered to her, the letter of the queen of England. At this conference Lindsay, Ruthven, and Douglas insisted on being present, according to the orders which they had received from the lords of the secret council. The queen was thus cut off from all private conference with her servant, and she complained bitterly of such rigour, but could obtain no redress. Eight days afterwards, however, Melvil was again sent by them to Lochleven and permitted to see his royal mistress alone. In this interview he endeavoured (according to his own declaration,<sup>2</sup>) to persuade Mary to renounce Bothwell, but this she peremptorily refused, and her obduracy upon this point excited the utmost indignation in the lords and the people.

<sup>1</sup> "He (Lethington) does well like of your advice in divers heads, always there is matter enough probable (proveable) to proceed upon that matter we first agreed upon, and farther is thought expedient."

<sup>2</sup> Robert Melvil's Declaration, Hopetoun, MSS. Also MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Sir James Melvil to Drury. Edinburgh, 8 July, 1567.

Knox, now all powerful with the lower ranks, thundered out, as Throkmorton expressed it to Cecil, *cannon-hot* against her, and so thoroughly convinced were his party and some of the leaders, of her guilt, that it became generally reported, she would be brought to a public trial. So much was this the case, that early in July Lord Herries held a meeting with Lord Scrope, in which when the English warden attempted to detach him from Mary's interests, he declared that if Morton and his faction would set his mistress at liberty, he was ready to assist them in prosecuting the king's murder, but if they intended to bring the queen to her trial by open assize, he would defend her, though forsaken by all the world.<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime, Sir Nicholas Throkmorton, Elizabeth's ambassador, left the English court on his mission to Scotland. We have seen that the English queen, in her message to Morton and his confederates, by Robert Melvil, had encouraged them in their enterprise, and promised them her support, but her instructions to Throkmorton, although severely worded, were more favourable to the captive queen. He was directed indeed to express her grief and indignation that decided steps had not been taken for the punishment of the king's murder, to point out the mortal reproach she had incurred by her marriage, and to assure her, that at first she had resolved to give

<sup>1</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Scrope to Cecil. B. C. Carlisle. 9th July, 1567.

up all farther communication with one who seemed by her acts so reckless of her honour; but he was instructed to add, that the late rebellious conduct of her nobles had softened these feelings. Whatever had been Mary's conduct, it did not (she said) belong to subjects to assume the sword, or to punish the faults of the prince, and so much did she commiserate and resent her imprisonment, that she was prepared to compel her nobles to restore her to liberty. At the same time she was ready to lend her countenance and assistance for the prosecution of the king's murder, and the preservation of the young prince. In conclusion, Throkmorton was enjoined to declare to the Scottish queen, the charges with which she was loaded by her subjects, and to hear her answers and defence.<sup>1</sup>

On crossing the border, the ambassador was met by Lethington, the secretary, at Coldingham, who conducted him to Fascastle, a strong fortalice overhanging the German Ocean.<sup>2</sup> Here he was received by Hume, the lord of the castle, with Sir James Melvil; and in a conference, held with the Scottish secretary, it was soon apparent that he had to deal with those who were as crafty, cautious, and diplomatic as himself or his mistress. On the same day he wrote to Cecil, and informed him that the

<sup>1</sup> Brit. Mus. Cotton. MSS. Caligula. C. 1. f. 3. Instructions to Sir N. Throkmorton, 30 June, 1567.

<sup>2</sup> Robertson's Appendix, No. XXI. Throkmorton to Cecil, 12th July, 1567. Fascastle is described by him as "very little and very strong—a place fitter to lodge prisoners than folks at liberty."

Scottish lords dreaded Elizabeth's caprice. They assured themselves, he said, "that if they ran her fortune, she would leave them in the briars," and desert them after they had committed themselves. Already they complained that she had departed from her first promises to Robert Melvil, and had sent a cold answer to their last letter, and as for her proposal to set their sovereign at liberty, if sincere in this, it was plain (they said) that the queen of England sought their ruin, for were Mary once free, it would be absurd to talk of the prosecution of the murder, or indeed of any other condition.

Touching their intended policy to France, a subject upon which Elizabeth was exceedingly jealous, Throkmorton found them resolved to hold, for the present, the same cautious course which they pursued to England, neither positively refusing nor accepting the overtures of the French king. These, indeed, as Lethington reported them to the English ambassador, were of an extraordinary description, and if Mary owed little gratitude to Elizabeth, she was certainly still less obliged to her royal relatives at that court whose exertions at this moment were strenuously devoted to the setting up a party in Scotland composed of her enemies, the confederate lords. In accomplishing this, they were ready to sacrifice the captive queen. It was suggested that the government and the young prince should be managed by a council of the lords, acting, of course, under French influence, and as for the queen

herself, de Croc, the ambassador proposed to rid them of her altogether, and shut her up in a French convent.<sup>1</sup>

It is probable that the Scottish secretary had not exaggerated these intentions of France, for we find, that at this very time the greatest exertions were made by the French king to secure the services of the Earl of Murray then at his court.<sup>2</sup> These splendid bribes he steadily rejected, but on the other hand, he was so far from embracing the interests of Morton and his associates, that he dispatched one of his servants, Nicholas Elphinston, on a mission to the Scottish queen, assuring her of his devotion to her service.

Elphinston arrived in London a few days after Throkmorton's departure for Scotland. He was there admitted to a secret interview with Elizabeth, which lasted for an hour, and his communication had the effect of rendering her more favourable to Mary, and more hostile to the confederate lords. There is a curious piece of secret history connected with the interview between this envoy of Murray and Elizabeth, which is to be found in

<sup>1</sup> Robertson's Appendix, No. XXI. Throkmorton to Cecil, Fascastle, 12th July, 1567.

<sup>2</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. *French Corresp.* Norris to Elizabeth, Poissy, 2 July, 1567. Same to Cecil. MS. Letter, Poissy, 2d July, 1567. Also MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Norris to Cecil, Paris, 16 July, 1567. " \* \* Great is the travel and pain that hath been here taken to win the Earl of Murray, offering both the Order, and great augmentation of living, which, as he hath sent me word, he hath refused, lest, by taking gifts, he should be bound where he is now free."

a letter of Mr. Heneage, a gentleman of the court, to Cecil. This person was in waiting in the ante-chamber of the palace, when Elizabeth, after dismissing Murray's messenger, called him hastily and sent him to Cecil. He was directed by her to inform the prime minister that Murray had dispatched his servant with letters to the Queen of Scotland, expressive of his attachment, and offering his service; that they were to be delivered to her own hands, and not to be seen by the confederates; and that he had in charge also to remonstrate with them for their audacity in imprisoning their sovereign. But this was not all. The rest of the commission given by the English queen to Heneage, is still more interesting in furnishing us with an admission from her own lips of that insidious dealing which so often marked her policy. Tell Cecil, said she, that he must instantly write a letter, in my name, to my Sister, to which I will set my hand, for I cannot write it myself, as I have not "used her well and faithfully in these broken matters that be past. The purport of it must be to let her know that the Earl of Murray never spoke diffamedly of her for the death of her husband, never plotted for the secret conveying of the prince to England, never confederated with the lords to depose her, on the contrary, now in my Sister's misery let her learn from me the truth, and that is, that she has not a more faithful and honourable servant in Scotland.<sup>1</sup> At this date,

<sup>1</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Mr. T. Heneage to Cecil, From the Court, 8th July, 1567.

therefore, (July 8th) if we are to believe this evidence, and there seems no good reason to question it, Murray was no party to the schemes of the confederates. On the contrary, he had declared himself against them, and was resolved to support and defend the queen his sovereign.

But to return to Throkmorton. This ambassador proceeded from Fascalte to the capital, accompanied by Lord Hume, and an escort of four hundred horse. The day after his arrival (July 13) there was a solemn fast held by the Reformed Church, the leaders of which were decided enemies of the Scottish Queen, and his first impressions gave him little hope, either that he would be permitted to visit the royal captive, or be able to do her much good.<sup>1</sup> Nor did the confederate lords seem in any haste to have a conference with him, and when he accidentally met their leader, Morton, he excused himself from entering upon business, as the day was devoted to sacred exercises. Lethington, however, came to him in the evening, and from the tone of his conversation, it was apparent to the ambassador, that they were determined he should not be allowed to see Mary. They had already, he said, refused the French ambassador, and in the present state of things, they did not chuse to irritate France.

As to the probable fate of the unhappy prisoner, Throkmorton found all things looking gloomily. Her

<sup>1</sup> Throkmorton to the Queen. Edinburgh, 14 July, 1567. Robertson, Appendix No. XXI.



chief supporters, the party of the Hamiltons, were divided in their councils, and almost equally treacherous in their intentions with her more open enemies. Being next heirs to the crown, it was generally believed, that they would have been glad to have got rid both of Mary and the prince; and if we may credit Throkmorton, they only "made a shew of the liberty of the queen, that they might induce these lords to destroy her, rather than they should recover her by violence out of their hands.<sup>1</sup> Argile was tampering with the lords of the secret council. Herries, though more attached to her service, was not to be trusted when his own interests came in the way, the French king and the queen mother were ready to desert her, if they could gain the confederates, and singular as the fact may appear to those who have given credit to the attacks of his opponents, her only true friend, at this moment, was the Earl of Murray. He had despatched Elphinston, as we have seen, to visit Mary and assure her of his services, and this envoy arrived in the capital much about the same time with Throkmorton. But when he requested to have access to the queen, and deliver his letters, he received a peremptory denial.<sup>1</sup> It has been often asserted, and very commonly believed, that from the first rising of the lords against Mary and Bothwell, Murray was one of their party, in active corre-

<sup>1</sup> Throkmorton to Elizabeth, 18th July, 1567. Also Same to same, July 14th, 1567. Both letters in Robertson's Appendix, No. XXI. And Same to same, June 19th, 1567. Caligula, C. i. fol. 18.

spondence with them, yet how are we to reconcile this with his present attachment to Mary's interests, his rejection of the offers of France, and the jealousy with which he was regarded by the confederates. But of all the enemies of the miserable queen, the most bitter were the Presbyterian clergy and the people. In the midst of their austerity and devotional exercises, the ministers expressed themselves with deep indignation against her, and looked forward with anxious interest to their great ecclesiastical council, which was to be held in eight days, and in which they had determined that the whole matter connected with the murder and her imprisonment should be debated.

The more that Throkmorton investigated the state of parties during this interval, the more he became convinced of the hopelessness of his own interference, and the imminent peril of Mary. So far were the people from listening with any patience to the doctrines of passive obedience, which Elizabeth had instructed him to inculcate, that they took their stand on the very opposite ground, the responsibility of the prince, and the power of the nation to call their sovereign to account for any crimes she might have committed. "It is a public speech among all the people (so wrote the ambassador to Elizabeth), that their queen hath no more liberty nor privilege to commit murder nor adultery, than any other private person, neither by God's laws nor by the laws of the

realm.”<sup>1</sup> These popular principles were now for the first time openly and powerfully preached to the commons. Knox, Craig, and the other ministers of the Reformed Church, considered the pulpit and the press as the lawful vehicles of their political as well as their religious opinions, and the celebrated Buchanan, who had joined the confederates, enforced the same doctrines with uncommon vigour and ability. Their arguments were grounded on the examples of wicked princes in the Old Testament who were deposed and put to death for their idolatry, and on alleged but disputable precedents in their own history of similar severity exercised by subjects against their sovereigns.<sup>2</sup> In consequence of all these efforts, the few friends who had at first ventured to defend the Scottish queen were silenced and intimidated, and the public mind became inflamed to such a state of madness and fury, that she began to think of saving her life by retiring to a nunnery in France, or living with the old Duchess of Guise.<sup>3</sup>

At this moment Robert Melvil was for the third time sent by the confederates to Lochleven, instructed to make a last effort to prevail upon his mistress to renounce Bothwell. By him Throkmorton found an opportunity to convey a letter, in which he

<sup>1</sup> Throkmorton to Elizabeth, July 18, 1567. Robertson, Appendix, No. XXII.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> St. P. Off. Throkmorton to the Queen, July 16, 1567. Printed by Laing, vol. ii. p. 122.

strongly urged Mary to the same course.<sup>1</sup> But the mission was completely unsuccessful. The queen, who believed herself to be with child, declared her firm resolution rather to die than desert her husband, and declare her child illegitimate. She requested Melvil, at the same time, to deliver a letter to the lords which implored them to have consideration of her health, and to change the place of her imprisonment to Stirling, where she might have the comfort of seeing her son. She was willing, she said, to commit the government of the realm, either to the Earl of Murray alone, or to a council of the nobility, and proposed, that if they would not obey her as their queen, they should regard her with some favour as the mother of their prince, and the daughter of their king. To this interview between Mary and Melvil no one was admitted, and before he took his leave she produced a letter, requesting him to convey it to Bothwell. This he peremptorily refused, upon which she threw it angrily into the fire.<sup>2</sup>

On his return to the capital, he found the animosity against the queen at its height, and the English ambassador in despair of being able to restrain it from some fatal excess. Many openly declared that no power, either within or without the realm, should preserve her from that signal punishment which her notorious crimes deserved.

<sup>1</sup> Robert Melvil's Declaration. Hopetoun MSS. Throk Morton to the Queen, July 18, 1567. Robertson, Appendix, No. XXII.

<sup>2</sup> Melvil's Declaration. Hopetoun MSS.

Others, more moderate, proposed to restore her to the royal dignity, if she consented to divorce Bothwell; some advised that she should resign in favour of the prince, who might govern by a council, whilst she retired for life to France. This was Athol's scheme, and not disliked by Morton, but to the majority of the privy council it was unacceptable. They deemed it indispensable that Mary should be publicly arraigned and condemned to perpetual imprisonment as guilty of the king's murder, whilst some went so far as to insist that she should not only be condemned and degraded, but put to death.<sup>1</sup>

When such was the state of public feeling, the General Assembly of the Church convened in Edinburgh.<sup>2</sup> The Protestant clergy had already entered into a strict coalition with Morton and the lords of the Secret Council, who now held the whole power of the government, and the proceedings of their ecclesiastical tribunal partook of the rigorous and uncompromising character of Knox and Buchanan, its leaders. It was argued that the queen was guilty of crimes for which she ought to forfeit her life, and there seemed to be every probability that this dreadful result was about to take place, had it not been for the interference of Throkmorton, who, with the utmost earnestness,

<sup>1</sup> Caligula, C. i. fol. 18. MS. Letter, Throkmorton to Elizabeth, July 19, 1567.

<sup>2</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Robert Melvil to Elizabeth, Edinburgh, July 29, 1567.

remonstrated against such an extremity.<sup>1</sup> After violent debates, a more moderate course was adopted. Mary had (as we have seen), already intimated her readiness to resign the government to the Earl of Murray. It was now resolved to follow up the idea, and for this purpose, Lord Lindsay, who had left Lochleven to attend the General Assembly, was despatched thither in company with Robert Melvil. From this nobleman, one of the fiercest zealots of his party, Mary had every thing to dread: her passionate menace to him on the day she was taken prisoner at Carberry had not been forgotten, and he was now selected as a man whom she would hardly dare to resist. He carried with him three instruments drawn up by the Lords in their sovereign's name. By the first she was made to demit the government of the realm in favour of her son, and to give orders for his immediate coronation. By the second, she, in consequence of his tender infancy, constituted her "dear brother," the Earl of Murray, Regent of the realm, and by the third she appointed the duke, with the Earls of Lennox, Argile, Athol, Morton, Glencairn, and Mar, regents of the kingdom till the return of Murray from France, with power to continue in that high office, if he refused it.<sup>2</sup>

Before Lindsay was admitted, Melvil had a pri-

<sup>1</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Robert Melvil to Elizabeth. Edinburgh, 29th July, 1567.

<sup>2</sup> Anderson, vol. ii. pp. 208-220 inclusive.

vate interview with the queen, and assured her that her refusal to sign the papers would endanger her life. Nor was this going too far. It is certain, that had she proved obstinate the lords were resolved to bring her to a public trial; that they spoke with the utmost confidence of her conviction for the king's murder, and affirmed that they possessed proof of her guilt in her own handwriting.<sup>1</sup> These threats and assertions were in all probability communicated to his royal mistress by Melvil; and he insinuated that she ought to be the less scrupulous, as any deed signed in captivity, and under fear of her life, was invalid. He brought a message to the same purpose from Athol and Lethington, and a letter from Throkmorton.

It was a trying moment for Mary; and for a short time she resisted every intreaty, declaring passionately that she would sooner renounce her life than her crown; but when Lindsay was admitted, his stern demeanour at once terrified her into compliance. He laid the instruments before her, and with eyes filled with tears, and a trembling hand she took the pen and signed the papers without even reading their contents.<sup>2</sup> It was necessary, however, that they should pass the privy seal, and here a new outrage was committed. The keeper, Thomas Sinclair, remonstrated, and declared that the queen being in ward, her resignation was ineffectual; Lindsay attacked his house,

<sup>1</sup> MS. Letter, Throkmorton to Cecil, 25 July, 1567. Caligula, C. I. f. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Spottiswood, p. 211.

tore the seal from his hands, and compelled him by threats and violence to affix it to the resignation.<sup>1</sup>

Having been so far successful, the lords hurried on the consummation of their plans, and resolved without delay to crown the prince, requesting Throkmorton's presence at the ceremony, and dispatching Sir James Melvil to invite the Hamiltons. The English ambassador, however, gave a peremptory refusal. Their whole proceedings, he said, had been contrary to the advice, and in contempt of the remonstrances of his mistress.<sup>2</sup> The Hamiltons also declined; not, as they commissioned Melvil to inform the confederate lords, on the ground of their being enemies; so far from this they thanked them for their gentle message, but simply because, from the first, they had been made no party to their intentions. It was their wish also, they said, to present a protest, that this coronation should not be prejudicial to the title of the Duke of Chastelherault as next heir to the crown; and their request having been granted, they professed to offer no opposition.<sup>3</sup>

It was determined that the coronation should be held in the High Church at Stirling, and thither

<sup>1</sup> We owe the discovery of this fact to Mr. Riddell, in a paper published in "Blackwood's Magazine," for October, 1817.

<sup>2</sup> Throkmorton to Elizabeth, Edinburgh, 26 July, 1567. Stevenson's Selections, illustrating the reign of Mary Queen of Scotland, p. 251. The Original is in the St. P. Off.

<sup>3</sup> Throkmorton to Elizabeth, Edinburgh, 31 July, 1567. Stevenson's Selections, p. 258.



the confederate lords repaired; but on their arrival a collision took place between the new and old opinions. The clergy, of whom Knox was the great leader, insisted that the king should not be anointed, but simply crowned, anointing being a Jewish rite, and abrogated by the gospel dispensation. Against this notion it was argued that the custom was not a superstitious relic, but an ancient solemnity recognised by the general usage of Christendom; and after a bitter contest, the objection was overruled, and the ceremonial proceeded, every endeavour having been made on the part of the lords to make it as solemn and magnificent as possible. In the procession Athol bore the crown, Morton the sceptre, and Glencairn the sword, whilst Mar, his governor, carried the infant prince in his arms into the church. The deeds of resignation by the queen were read; and Lindsay, and Ruthven, on their oath testified that they were voluntary. Knox then preached the sermon, the crown was placed on the king's head by the Bishop of Orkney, Morton laying his hand on the Gospels, took the oaths on behalf of his sovereign, that he should maintain the reformed religion and extirpate heresy; the lords swore allegiance, placing their hands on his head; the burgesses followed, and in conclusion, the Earl of Mar lifted the monarch from the throne and carried him back to his nursery in the castle.<sup>1</sup> At night, in the

<sup>1</sup> Throkmorton to Elizabeth, Edinburgh, 31 July, 1567, Stevenson, p. 257. Calderwood, MS. Hist. p. 684. Ayscough, 4735.

capital, the blaze of bonfires, and universal mirth and dancing attested the joy of the people.<sup>1</sup>

A more extraordinary revolution was perhaps never completed without bloodshed, and apparently with such disproportionate means. A small section of the nobles and the gentry, unsupported by foreign aid, with a handful of soldiers,<sup>2</sup> at no time exceeding four hundred men, opposed by the highest of the aristocracy, and threatened with the hostility of England and France, were seen to rise with appalling suddenness and strength. They dispel their enemies; they imprison their sovereign; they hesitate whether she shall not be openly arraigned and executed; they compel her to resign her regal authority; and they now, finally, place the crown on the head of her son, an infant of a year old, and possess themselves of the whole power of the government. If we look for the cause of this extraordinary success, it is to be traced chiefly, if not altogether, to the unhappy infatuation and imprudence of the queen. It was this that separated her friends, strengthened the hands of her enemies, gave ample field for the worst suspicions, and alienated from her the hearts and sympathy of the people. But to return.

The first intelligence of these events was received with the utmost indignation by Elizabeth. She had already instructed Throkmorton to remonstrate with the lords, she had warned him to

<sup>1</sup> Throkmorton to Elizabeth, July 31, 1567.

<sup>2</sup> By "soldiers," is here meant regular *waged* troops.

beware of giving his presence or countenance to the coronation. She now interdicted him from holding any farther intercourse, as her ambassador, with men who had treated her with such discourtesy and contempt, and declared "that she would make herself a party against them to the revenge of their sovereign, and an example to all posterity."<sup>1</sup>

When her letters were delivered, the principal leaders, Morton, Mar, Glencairn, Hume and Lethington, had come to Edinburgh, to await the arrival of Murray, to whom they had dispatched an envoy, informing him of his having been chosen regent. Throkmorton, in obedience to his mistress's commands, kept aloof; but Tullibardin, the comptroller, and brother-in-law to the Earl of Mar, one of the *interim* regents, volunteered a visit; and in the course of conversation on the late events, unveiled a scene of treachery upon the part of the Hamiltons, who had hitherto supported the queen, which filled him with horror. The two great leaders of this party were the Archbishop of St. Andrew's, and the Abbot of Kilwinning; and when the English ambassador remonstrated upon the violence of the recent proceedings, and threatened the lords of the secret council with hostility upon the part of Elizabeth, he was solemnly assured that a perseverance in such a course, was the certain way to shorten Mary's life. Within the last forty-eight hours, said

<sup>1</sup> Orig. Draft, St. P. Off. Instructions to Sir N. Throkmorton, 27 July, 1567. It is corrected in Cecil's hand.

the comptroller, the Archbishop of St. Andrew's, on the part of the Hamiltons, has proposed to us to put the queen to death. They have recommended this course as the only certain method of reconciling all parties; and on our consenting to adopt it, they are ready to join us to a man, and to bring Argile and Huntly along with them.

Throkmorton at first expressed his utter disbelief that any men who had hitherto borne a fair character could be guilty of such atrocious and cold-blooded treachery. He argued also on the point of expediency, that more profit might be made of the queen's life than of her death. She might be divorced from Bothwell and afterwards marry a son of the duke's, or a brother of Argile's. To this Tullibardin's answer was remarkable. "My lord ambassador," said he, "these matters you speak of have been in question amongst them, but now they see not so good an *outgait*<sup>1</sup> by any of those devices as by the queen's death. For she being taken away, they account but the little king betwixt them and home,<sup>2</sup> who may die. They love not the queen, and they know she hath no great fancy to any of them, and they fear her the more, because she is young and may have many children, which is the thing they would be rid of."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Outgait—outlet.

<sup>2</sup> The Hamiltons were nearest heirs to the Crown, failing Mary and her son. *Home* here means the succession to the throne.

<sup>3</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Throkmorton to Elizabeth, Edinburgh, 9 August, 1567.

Throkmorton, however, persevered in his incredulity, and that same evening the secretary Lethington held a secret conference with him, in which he assured him that Tullibardin had stated nothing but the truth. I think it right as these are new facts in this part of our history, involving a charge of unwonted perfidy even in this age, to give the particulars of this extraordinary conversation in the words of the ambassador to Elizabeth. "The same day," said he, (he is describing the events of the 7th of August) "the Lord of Lethington came to visit me on behalf of all the lords. He demanded of me when I heard from your majesty, and what was the matter why I had sent to Stirling for audience. \* \* I answered, to let the lords and him understand what your majesty did think of their rash proceedings, finding the matter very strange in this hasty sort to proceed with a queen, their sovereign, being a prince anointed, not having imparted their intent to your majesty. \* \* \*

"For answer, the Laird of Lethington said, 'My Lord Ambassador, these lords did think their cause could suffer no delays, and as for imparting their purposes to the queen's Majesty your sovereign, they doubted that neither she would allow that which was meet for them to do, neither could take any of their doings in good part. And where you have charged us with deprivation of the queen from her royal estate, it doth appear by such instruments as I sent you from Stirling, that we have not denuded the queen of her regality, but she hath voluntarily relinquished the same to her

son.' "I asked him," continued Throkmorton, "what free will there might be, or uncompulsory consent, for a prisoner, and such a one as every day looked for to lose her life?" 'Yea,' said he, 'it is you that seek to bring it to pass, what show soever the queen, your mistress, or you, do make to save her life, or set her at liberty. For the Hamiltons and you concur together; you have nothing in your mouths but liberty, and nothing less in your hearts. My Lord Ambassador, (he continued), I have heard what you have said unto me, I assure you, if you should use this speech unto them, which you do unto me, all the world could not save the queen's life three days to an end; and as the case now standeth, it will be much ado to save her life.'

"I said, 'My Lord of Lethington, if you remember, I told you, at my first coming hither, when I understood you minded the coronation of her son, that when you had touched her dignity, you would touch her life shortly after. \* \* \* 'Well, my Lord,' said he, 'I trust you do not take me to be one that doth thirst my sovereign's blood, or that would stain my conscience with the shedding of the same. You know how I have proceeded with you since your coming hither. I have given you the best advice I could to prevent extremity, and either the queen, your sovereign, will not be advised, or you do forbear to advise her. I say unto you, as I am a Christian man, if we which have dealt in this action would consent to take the queen's life from her, all the lords which hold out and lie aloof from

us, would come and conjoin with us within these two days. This morning the Bishop of St. Andrew's, and the Abbot of Kilwinning, have sent a gentleman unto us for that purpose. And likewise the Earl of Huntly hath sent Duncan Forbes, within this hour, to conclude with us upon the same ground, and to be plain with you, there be very few amongst ourselves which be of any other opinion.' ”

Throkmorton then began to use persuasions to dissuade them from such a fearful extremity. Upon which Lethington assured him, that, as far as he himself was concerned, there needed no argument — but he added, emphatically, “How can you satisfy men that the queen shall not become a dangerous party against them in case she live and come to liberty.” I said, “Divorce her from Bothwell.” He said, “We cannot bring it to pass; she will in no wise hear of the matter.” The conversation was then broken off by Sir James Balfour coming in to carry Lethington to the council, who were waiting for him.<sup>1</sup>

It is clear, then, that at this moment the Hamiltons, instead of being friends to the unhappy queen, as they are represented in our popular historians, were acting towards her with treachery and cruelty; they were ready to sacrifice her to their own dreams of ambition,<sup>2</sup> and the life of Mary was in the most

<sup>1</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Throkmorton to Elizabeth, 9th August, 1567.

<sup>2</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Throkmorton to Leicester, Edinburgh, 9th August, 1567.

imminent peril.<sup>1</sup> The remonstrances and arguments of Throkmorton, however, so far prevailed, that it was agreed the fatal blow should be suspended till the arrival of the Earl of Murray.

To this remarkable man, on whose movements so much depended, all eyes were now turned, and his future conduct became the subject of much discussion. He had been elected regent. Would he accept this high office, which, considering the divided state of parties, brought with it so many difficulties? What were his sentiments as to the extraordinary events which had lately taken place? The deposition and captivity of his sovereign, the coronation of the prince, the remonstrances of England, the efforts of France, above all, the guilt and punishment of the queen, now so strongly urged by that party of the Reformed Church with whom he had hitherto acted? All this was field for fearful conjecture to some—for anxious speculation to all; and Murray's was a character not easily fathomed, which often concealed purposes of great weight and determination under a blunt and open manner. He had now been absent from Scotland for nearly four months, and it is certain, that when

<sup>1</sup> Keith, p. 436, has fallen into the error of representing the band or agreement of the party of the Hamiltons at Dumbar-ton, as having been entered into about the 29th July, instead of the 29th June, which is its true date, as seen on the original instrument in the St. P. Off. In Mr. Dawson Turner's volume of MS. Scottish letters, there is a copy of the same deed, with the correct date 29th June.



Morton and the lords of the Secret Council first planned that revolution (14th May), which ended so fatally to Mary, they had secretly communicated with him. The exact nature of that communication we know not, but it was reported that he approved of their designs, and a month later, after the imprisonment of the queen, they again entered into correspondence with him; once more, about a fortnight later, and once again, after the resignation of the queen, this correspondence was renewed. These facts are undoubtedly calculated to excite suspicion, and we are not to be surprised, if, in the heat of the controversy which has agitated this portion of our history, it has been argued from them that Murray not only approved of, but directed all the plans of the conspirators. But the enquirer after truth dares not advance so rapidly. All that is proved amounts to the fact, that the lords of the confederacy against Mary, from the first, were anxious to gain him. Indeed, his election to the regency showed how far they were ready to go to secure him—but of his answers to their letters we know nothing. It is also worthy of remark, that on the only occasion when we can detect a message sent to them by Murray, it was hostile to his reputed friends. Elphinston, whom we have seen deputed by him to communicate with his imprisoned mistress and her captors, brought an assurance of such comfort and loyalty to Mary, and so severe a remonstrance to the lords, that they interdicted him from seeing the queen until they had

made up their minds to depose her or to put her to death. Such a message could not have proceeded from an associate.

On being informed of his election to the regency, Murray prepared to leave France, and his intentions at this moment formed an object of the deepest interest to the court of England, and the Tuilleries. Elizabeth was naturally anxious to preserve the influence she had hitherto exerted in the affairs of Scotland. She considered her hold over the measures of that country as an essential part of the great system for the support of Protestantism in Europe. At the same time, however, she was highly incensed at the lords of the secret council for their deposition of their sovereign: their conduct, in her opinion, was insulting to the majesty of the crown, and destructive of all principles of good government, and as she had determined to exert herself to procure the liberty of the captive queen, she was anxious to secure Murray in the same service. Such were the feelings of Elizabeth.

The court of France on the other hand, was equally anxious to preserve or rather to recover the influence it once held over Scotland, and at first the king declared that he would strain every effort to have Mary and the prince brought into his kingdom—but this idea was soon abandoned. The Scottish queen had never been a favourite with the queen mother, and provided they gained the confederate lords, in whose hands at this moment was the

whole power of the government, and enlisted Murray in their interest, the French soon came to care little whether the queen remained a captive or was set at liberty. High bribes were offered him before his departure, and when he resisted these entreaties, and it began to be rumoured that he leant to the side of England, every impediment was thrown in the way of his return.<sup>1</sup> But such difficulties were overcome by his prudence and firmness. Without binding himself to France in any specific agreement, he assured the king of his desire to use every exertion for the deliverance of his sovereign, and left the court with Monsieur De Lignerolles, who was ordered to accompany him. Of this person the avowed object was, to carry a message from the French king to the lords of the secret council, but his real errand was, to watch the proceedings of the regent elect, and hurry him on to Scotland, without giving him time to communicate with Elizabeth.<sup>2</sup>

At this moment, when on the eve of leaving France, Murray was informed, probably by Elphinston, his own servant, of the alleged proofs of Mary's guilt, which had been discovered by her enemies in Scotland, his informant stating, that he had seen and read a letter of the Scottish queen to Bothwell,

<sup>1</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. Norris to Cecil, Poissy, 2d July 1567. French Corr: MS. Letter, Orig. St. P. Off. Norris to Cecil, July 16, 1567. French Corr. Also Norris to Elizabeth, July 23, 1567. Stevenson's Selections, p. 243.

<sup>2</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. French Corr. Norris to Cecil, Paris, July 16, 1567.

which proved that she was privy to her husband's murder.<sup>1</sup> Hitherto the accusations against his sovereign had been vague and unsupported by proof, but if this were true, and if she still obstinately refused to renounce Bothwell, it appeared clear to him that her immediate restoration to liberty was impossible. At the same time this intelligence necessarily worked a change in Murray's feelings more favourable to the confederate lords, and more severe towards his sovereign, so that on his arrival at the English court, his interview with the queen was angry and unsatisfactory: Elizabeth expressed herself determined to restore the imprisoned queen, and to punish the audacious subjects who had dethroned her. Against this dictatorial tone, Murray's spirit rose, and the queen, who expected implicit obedience, upbraided him with such severity, that she shook his affection towards England, a result much deplored by Bedford and Throkmorton. These able persons, and her chief minister Cecil, who were intimately acquainted with the state of the two parties, had earnestly enforced on the queen the necessity of leaving Mary to her fate, and encouraging the lords who had deposed her. They considered her cause to be desperate, and and they believed such a course to be the only

<sup>1</sup> Gonzalez Apuntamientos, p. 323. From a Letter of Norris to Cecil. MS. St. P. Off. 23 July, 1567. French Corr. it appears that Murray left the French court at that time. Also Throkmorton to Cecil, Aug. 2, 1567. Stevenson's Selections, p. 263.

likely way to prevent these men from throwing themselves into the arms of the French King, who had made them flattering advances, and was ready to desert the Scottish queen. It was to the honour of Elizabeth that she repudiated this advice, refused to abandon the cause of the captive princess, and perceiving the change in Murray's mind, dismissed him with no kindly feeling.<sup>1</sup>

On the 8th of August he reached Berwick, accompanied by De Lignerolles. Here he was the guest of Bedford, his ancient friend and associate, and was met by two envoys from the lords of the confederacy Sir James Makgill, lord clerk register, and the well known Sir James Melvil; the first was the representative of that section who were most determined against the queen, the other was deputed by that more moderate class, who wished to spare her life, and contemplated the possibility of her restitution. Both of these were fully able to inform him of the state of parties, and Makgill, who had been a principal actor in the deposition of his sovereign, and knew all that could be urged against her, explained to him their whole proceedings, and urged the absolute necessity of his accepting the regency. Murray, however, refused to commit himself, and pursuing his journey, was met at the Bound Rode, the line which separates the two countries, by a troop of four hundred noblemen and gentlemen

<sup>1</sup> MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Bedford to Cecil, 10th Aug. 1567. Also 14 Aug. 1567. B. C. Bedford to Cecil. Also MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B. C. 1st Aug. 1567. Bedford to Cecil.

who had assembled to honour his arrival. From thence he rode to Whittingham.

It was only a year and a half before, that in this fatal house the conference had been held between Lethington, Bothwell, and Morton, in which the king's murder was determined. Bothwell was now a fugitive and an outlaw, but his associates in guilt, the same Lethington and Morton, now received Murray at Whittingham, and cordially sympathised with him, when he expressed his horror for the crime, and his resolution to avenge it.

After a night's rest, the regent elect proceeded to the capital, which he entered next day, surrounded by the nobility, and amid the acclamations of the citizens. Here for two days he employed himself unremittingly in examining the state of the two factions, holding consultations with his friends, and acquiring the best information as to the difficulties he might have to encounter in accepting the high office which was offered him. He had already held an interview with Throkmorton, the English ambassador, who met him for this purpose a few miles from Edinburgh, and to this able judge, who had no interest to blind him, Murray appeared to be acting with sincerity and honour—he was already aware of the general nature of De Lignerolles' message to the lords of the confederacy, and in the secret consultations which he held with these persons, the whole history of their proceedings must have been laid before him. From them he now learnt the full extent of Mary's infatu-

ation and alleged guilt ; the proofs and letters which, as they asserted, convicted her of participation in her husband's murder, were now, no doubt, imparted to him, and he was made aware of the stern determination which many of them had embraced, of bringing her to a public trial, and if convicted, putting her to death. As to the difficulties of his situation, the faction of the Hamiltons and the hostility of Elizabeth were the principal obstacles in his way ; but the first were divided in their councils, and the English queen would soon, he trusted, be induced by Cecil to remove her opposition. On the whole, he felt almost resolved to accept the regency, but one point made him still hesitate. The demission of the crown, the deeds which nominated himself, and sanctioned the coronation of the prince, were said to have been extorted from Mary. If true, this would vitiate his title to the office, and he requested permission to see the queen in Lochleven before he gave his final answer. This demand startled the lords, and some thought it would be injudicious to grant it. To Throkmorton, the English ambassador, he had expressed himself with great commiseration towards the captive princess, and they dreaded the consequences of his pity or sympathy.

At last, however, they consented, and on the 15th of August, Murray, in company with Morton, Athol, and Lord Lindsay, visited the queen in her prison. It was a remarkable and affecting interview. Mary received them with tears, and pas-

sionately complained of her wrongs. Then taking Murray aside, before supper, she eagerly questioned him as to the intentions of the lords, and in vain endeavoured to fathom his own. Contrary to his usual open and frank demeanour, he was gloomy, silent, and reserved. When the bitter meal had past, she again spoke to him in private, and torn by fear and suspense, pathetically described her sufferings. He was her brother, she said, her only friend, he must know her fate, for he was all-powerful with her enemies; would he now withhold his counsel and assistance in this extremity of her sorrow? What was she to look for? She knew some thirsted for her blood. In the end she implored him to keep her no longer in doubt, but to speak out, and even were it to criminate her, to use all freedom and plainness.<sup>1</sup>

Thus urged, Murray without mitigation or disguise, laid before her the whole history of her misgovernment, using a severity of language, and earnestness of rebuke, more suited (to use a phrase of Throkmorton's) to a ghostly confessor than a counsellor; her ill-advised marriage with Darnley, her hasty love, her sudden estrangement, the dark scene of his murder, the manifest guilt of Bothwell, his pretended trial, his unjust acquittal, her infatuated passion, her shameless marriage, her obstinate adherence to the murderer, the hatred of her subjects, her capture, her imprisonment, the

<sup>1</sup> Throkmorton to the queen, Aug. 20, 1567. Keith, p. 444.



allegations of the lords that they could convict her by her own letters, of being accessory to the murder, their determination to bring her to a public trial, and to put her to an ignominious death; all these points were insisted on, with a severity and plainness, to which the queen had seldom been accustomed, and the dreadful picture plunged the unhappy sufferer into an agony of despair. Throughout the dismal recital, she interrupted him by extenuations, apologies, confessions, and sometimes by denials. The conversation had been prolonged till past midnight, and Mary weeping and clinging to the hope of life, again and again implored her brother's protection: but Murray was unmoved, or at least he judged it best to seem so, and retired to his chamber, bidding her seek her chief refuge in the mercy of God.<sup>1</sup>

Next morning at an early hour she sent for him, and perceiving the impression he had made, he assumed a milder mood, threw in some words of consolation, and assured her that, whatever might be the conduct of others, to save her life he was ready to sacrifice his own, but unfortunately the decision lay not with him alone, but with the lords, the church, and the people. Much also depended on herself; if she attempted an escape, intrigued to bring in the French or the English, and thus disturbed the quiet government of her son, or continued in her inordinate affection to Bothwell,

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. ut supra.

she need not expect to live ; if she deplored her past sins, showed an abhorrence for the murder of her husband, and repented her former life with Bothwell, then might he hold out great hope that those in whose power she now lay would spare her life. As to her liberty, he said in conclusion, that was at present out of the question. He had as yet only a single voice in the state, like other nobles, it was therefore not in his power to procure it, nor would it be for her interest at this moment to desire it. It was Mary's weakness (in the present case we can hardly call it such) to be hurried away by impulses. She had passed the night under the dreadful conviction that her fate was decided, that she had but a short time to live. She now discerned a gleam of hope, and, starting from her seat, took Murray in her arms, and urged him to accept the regency, as the best and safest course for herself, her son, and her kingdom. He declined it, she again pressed it on him, he gave his reasons against undertaking so arduous a task. She replied, and insisted, that the service of his sovereign and his country ought to outweigh every selfish motive. He at last assented ; the queen then suggested that his first efforts should be directed to get all the forts into his hands, and requested him to take her jewels, and other articles of value, into his custody, as her only way of preserving them. On taking leave, she embraced and kissed him, with tears, and sent by him her blessing to her son. Murray then turned to Lindsay and Lochleven, and recommending them to treat

their royal mistress with all gentleness, left the castle.<sup>1</sup>

Having thus effected his purpose with much address, and some little duplicity, Murray and his companions repaired to Stirling to visit the prince. Here they remained until the evening of the 19th of August, when they returned to the capital, and on the 22nd, he was solemnly declared Regent. The ceremony of his inauguration was held in the council chamber, within the Tolbooth, where in presence of the lords of the secret council, the nobility, spirituality, and commissioners of burghs, the instruments granted by the queen were publicly read. After this, the earl delivered an oration, in which he alluded to his own unfitness for so high an office, accepted the charge, and took the oath with his hand upon the gospels. He swore that to the utmost of his power he would serve God, according to his holy word revealed in the New and Old Testament, that he would maintain the true religion as it was then received within that realm, that he would govern the people according to the ancient and loveable laws of the kingdom; procure peace, repress all wrong, maintain justice and equity, and root out from the realm all heretics and enemies to the true church of God.<sup>2</sup> He was then proclaimed amid universal acclamations, at the Cross of Edinburgh, and throughout all the counties and burghs

<sup>1</sup> Throk Morton to the Queen. August 20th, 1567. Brit. Mus. Caligula, C. 1. fol. xxviii. Printed by Keith, p. 444.

<sup>2</sup> Anderson's Collections, vol. ii., pp. 252, 253.

of the kingdom. Information of this event was instantly sent to the Earl of Bedford at Berwick, who next day, communicated it to Cecil.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bedford to Cecil, MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B.C. Aug. 23, 1567, Berwick. Also Throkmorton to Cecil, Aug. 23, 1567. Stevenson's Selections, p. 289.